

Representing Us in Beijing

Three cheers for these athletic trainers representing Team USA at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing:

Margaret Hunt, MS, ATC: *Medical Director*

Dave Andrews, ATC: *Men's Soccer*

Karen Bloch, MS, ATC, LAT, CSCS: *Water Polo*

Aaron Brock, MS, ATC, PES: *Volleyball*

Rich Campbell, ATC, CSCS: *Weightlifting,
Track and Field*

John Cavanaugh, ATC: *Swimming*

Vinny Comiskey, MA, ATC, CSCS: *Softball*

John Dana, ATC, NHLAT: *Canoe/Kayak*

Beth Darling, MPT, ATC, PT: *Diving*

LaGwyn Durden, MS, ATC: *Track and Field*

Dan Evans, ATC: *Boxing*

Grizelle Garcia, ATC: *Soccer*

Chris Gebeck, ATC: *Baseball*

Brent Hamula, ATC, CSCS: *Judo,*

Synchronized Swimming

Lisa Hass, MA, ATC: *Rowing, Triathlon*

Emery Hill, ATC: *Volleyball*

Angela Matson-Rufenacht, MS, ATC, PTA:

Track and Field

Ian Mcleod, MED, ATC, NCTMB: *Swimming*

Carolyn Miller, MS, ATC, CSCS: *Tennis*

Darryl Miller, MS, ATC, EMT, CSCS:

Wrestling

Diana Palmer, MS, ATC, EMT: *Badminton,*

Triathlon, Mod. Triathlon

Harris Patel, MA, ATC, PA-S: *Track and Field*

Don Rackey, ATC: *Gymnastics*

Doug Rank, ATC, PT: *Fencing, Mod.*

Pentathlon

Ed Ryan, ATC: *Basketball*

Carrie Ann Sakowski, ATC: *Field Hockey*

Kenneth Schroeder, ATC: *Water Polo*

Chris Schroer, MA, ATC, PES: *Wrestling,*

Taekwondo

Chad Smidt, MA, ATC: *Table Tennis,*

Wrestling

Casey Smith, MS, ATC, LAT: *Basketball*

Peter Toohey, ATC: *HPTC*

Debra Van Horn, ATC: *Gymnastics*

Scott Weiss, DPT, ATC, CSCS: *Sailing*

The Mind

Can Dedication Become Dangerous?

Text **Robert Andrews, MA, LMFT, CSC**

I don't know how many of you remember the case of Claire Markwardt. She was the Ohio cross country runner who, in the last race of her high school career, broke her leg – twice – but kept going.

Markwardt admits she was in pain for two weeks leading up to the race but kept quiet because she didn't want to be sidelined. In the last 200 meters of the competition she heard (and felt) a crack.

Down she went.

When she got up and tried to run some more, the break worsened into a complete fracture.

Still unwilling to stop, she scrambled on hands and knees the rest of the way to the finish line. (The video's on YouTube, if you missed it: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yaX1bAL6FeI>)

She was hailed as a hero for not giving up, for overcoming the odds, for playing through the pain.

I have many different thoughts and feelings about this. Sorrow, anger, disappointment, frustration, awe.

More and more athletes are being taught to override the intelligence of their bodies and push themselves further and further to ensure higher and higher levels of performance. This type of attitude alarms me. Claire told reporters the reason she sees the experience as good is because of the positive feedback she got from friends, athletes and the news media.

There is a powerful message going out to all athletes here: ignore your body's wisdom for the sake of the team. Or even for the sake of personal glory.

Her injury could have been catastrophic. What if she was suffering exertional heat illness but kept pushing? What if that fracture had been compound but she continued dragging herself through the dirt?

On the other hand... what remarkable courage and sacrifice for the team. That spirit of competition can't go unnoticed, nor should it be entirely squelched.

But as you get your teams ready for fall – and lots of contact sports – remind them there's an important line separating dedication from danger. Make it clear the body has limits and won't perform without proper care. Ask the coach to reinforce that message (genuinely, so kids don't fear repercussion).

Somebody's life could depend on it.

Robert Andrews is the director of The Institute of Sports Psychology in Houston, where he focuses on working with the injured athlete to help him/her move through the mental, emotional and spiritual issues surrounding sports-related injury. Reach him at robands@wt.net or 713.522.2200, or online at www.tinssp.com.



Have a question you'd like to see addressed in The Mind column? Send it to natanews@nata.org.